

REFLECTIONS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIA

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It is a high honor and a distinct personal privilege for me to address the Institute of Strategic Studies. I am grateful to you for your invitation and particularly for the opportunity to be one of the first speakers in your splendid new facilities. In America, the role of such "think tanks" is recognized as indispensable for the formulation of sound public policy. This is done by conducting analytical research, by informing the public, by stimulating discussion of policy issues, and by promoting a dynamic interaction among academics, government officials, and concerned citizens. That your institute and other research institutions are promoting this kind of policy dialogue bodes well for the future of Pakistan.

Today, I want to challenge you to consider with me one of the more sensitive issues confronting you and the world. I speak of nuclear weapons and non-proliferation policy. My intention is both to inform you about American policy and views, and to provoke you, if I can, into thinking hard about the pros and cons of nuclear weapons for Pakistan. I venture to do this, despite the evident pitfalls, for two reasons. First, it is my official responsibility to advance United States views. Second, I speak out of respect, appreciation, and warm affection for your country and people. I am anxious that Pakistanis not let events carry them forward willy-nilly but rather that they reflect deeply on the issues before taking a fateful decision. The decision, let me be clear, is Pakistan's to make, and only Pakistan's. But whatever it is, it will have profound consequences not only for Pakistan and its immediate neighbors, but the others as well, including the United States.

When in the past I have touched on nuclear issues, all too often editorials have appeared saying in effect the Americans have nuclear weapons, but they selfishly do not want us to have them. If they are so determined to keep them from us, the argument continues, they must have ulterior motives; thus, we certainly must work all the harder to attain nuclear weapons status. The appeal of such editorials to nationalist fervor is high. It seldom seems to occur to the authors that there might be some disadvantages to nuclear weapons. Moreover, editorialists or politicians or others discussing nuclear issues all too often fail to separate issues related to developing peaceful applications of nuclear energy from issues relevant to weapons programs. What little serious discussion of atomic weapons I have seen, for example in the "Defense Journal", strikes me as relatively unsophisticated. While making the case

for a deterrent to offset Indian conventional superiority, critical arguments about the stability of nuclear deterrence are rarely examined. Among the questions you might examine are:

- Would it be in Pakistan's interest to stimulate India to develop and deploy nuclear weapons?
- In what circumstances, if any, could nuclear weapons rationally be used?
- Would the existence of such capabilities be stabilizing or destabilizing?
- What exceptional command and control measures would be required to avoid mistaken use of nuclear weapons?
- Are there other policies and other uses for resources that would better advance Pakistan's national interests?
- Would Pakistan be better or worse off if it gained international cooperative support for its peaceful nuclear program by permitting international inspection of all its facilities?

Before developing further my nuclear theme, let me outline how I view the present state of Pakistan-U.S. relations.

The Pakistan - U.S. Relationship

The relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. has gained new strength and maturity since 1981. We are pursuing -- often in close cooperation -- a number of important shared goals:

- We share a common abhorrence of the Soviet invasion of independent Afghanistan. The U.S. stands squarely with Pakistan on the need to negotiate a political settlement based on the prompt withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and self-determination for the Afghans.
- We share a common perception of the importance of stability in the Gulf area. Here Pakistan, which enjoys important links both with Iran and the Gulf States, plays a special role in helping to secure peace in a troubled region.
- We each view relations with the Peoples Republic of China as a cornerstone of our foreign policies -- indeed the United States will always be grateful to Pakistan for the important intermediary role it played in bringing about the normalization of Sino-U.S. relations.
- Within Pakistan, we have welcomed and supported the restoration of representative, civilian government. While it is for the people of Pakistan to shape their government, we would be untrue to our history were we not to express our conviction that democratic institutions embodying the interests of individual citizens are, ultimately, the best protectors of a nation's security and well-being.
- We and the government of Pakistan are working together to secure other common objectives; for example, allowing a freer hand to market forces in order to promote faster economic growth, and curbing narcotics production and trafficking in order to maintain a healthy society.

One strength of our maturing relationship is our ability to face up to the areas in which we have differences. One such area relates to nuclear weapons. While we agree that the South Asian subcontinent should be free of nuclear weapons, we differ on how to attain this goal. How the question is resolved is important for us and for you. A miscalculation by either of us could produce a crisis in our relations; end our economic and military assistance programs. Also, within the region, a miscalculation could at best, greatly increase tensions between Pakistan and India; at worst, lead to a nuclear war with perhaps millions of casualties.

The Nuclear Dilemma

May I insert a personal note? It happened that when the United States entered World War II, I was a student at the University of Chicago where, in 1943, under the University football stadium, Enrico Fermi achieved the world's first controlled nuclear reaction. This step was part of a program launched by President Roosevelt who was prompted to act by reports that Nazi Germany was developing nuclear weapons. At the time, I knew nothing of these historic developments. I learned of the nuclear age only in August 1945 when, en route from an army staging area outside Naples to board a transport which was to carry my unit to the Philippines for the invasion of Japan, I read of Hiroshima in the army paper, "The Stars and Stripes." Since we went home instead of to the beaches of Honshu, I have never been one to criticize the use of nuclear weapons in 1945. But, as the potential of these weapons to end civilization as we know it became apparent, I and hundreds of millions more, including Chairman Gorbachev, came to share President Reagan's view that "Nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

Most simply, the nuclear dilemma, the problem and the promise, arises from the fact that the technology which unleashed the atom has the potential to do great good or enormous harm. Splitting the atom can produce needed electrical power and isotopes of immense value for research purposes. But atom splitting and fusion technology can also produce terrifying weapons of mass destruction. It is precisely because fissile material, plutonium enriched uranium, can be used either for peaceful purposes or for weapons that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), since its creation in the 1950s, has had as one of its central functions the operation of a system of safeguards. The IAEA utilizes various verification techniques to ensure, on an international, almost supranational basis, that fissile material is not diverted from peaceful uses into weapons programs.

The safeguards system is also incorporated into the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT provides assurance, both to one's neighbors and particularly potential adversaries, that an NPT signatory is not secretly developing weapons. Looked at another way, some view the treaty as constituting a "bargain" between weapons and non-weapons states -- the former accepting a good faith obligation to reduce, and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons; the latter renouncing nuclear explosives and accepting IAEA safeguards in exchange for assurances of access to nuclear materials and technology.

It is instructive, I think to look at some of the countries that have faced regional threats, had the potential to produce nuclear weapons, but instead chose to renounce such weapons and to sign the Treaty on Non-Proliferation (NPT). The Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Sweden, and most recently Egypt, are all in this group. Overall, there are over 130 nuclear non-weapons states party to the Treaty.

Each case is different, but the case of neutral Sweden is particularly interesting. At one time, Sweden embarked on an active program to develop nuclear weapons. However, after extended consideration, the Swedes decided they would be more secure without atomic bombs than with them.

The United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. France has agreed to act as if it were a party. China, while not a party to the Treaty, has agreed to some of the obligations for a nuclear weapons state. The Soviet Union and its allies also cooperate with Western countries in the International Atomic Energy Agency and in the London Suppliers Group -- an informal group of nuclear exporting states which meets regularly to coordinate export and safeguards policy in support of NPT objectives and provisions.

U.S. Non-Proliferation Policy

American policy on non-proliferation is based on a remarkable degree of long-standing consensus between both our major political parties -- a consensus which reflects the intensity of public concern about the threat of nuclear proliferation and the possibility of nuclear war. The U.S., during the 1950s and early 1960s, was the first to share peaceful nuclear technology. Our "Atoms for Peace" program helped a number of countries, including Pakistan, to get a start on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As one result, many isotopes are today beneficially used in Pakistani facilities for medical, industrial, and agricultural development. For example, atomically mutated seeds developed in your agricultural nuclear research laboratory in the Punjab played a major role in increasing cotton yields.

On the other hand, early arms control efforts to end the nuclear danger, such as the Baruch Plan, came to naught. With the passage of time, nuclear arsenals grew and increasingly sophisticated delivery systems evolved both in the West and in the Soviet Union and China. Successive American Presidents and Soviet Chairmen, concerned about the risks and responsive to world opinion, sought arms control agreements. Unfortunately, until now there has been more disagreement than agreement. We did reach agreement with the Soviet Union on a ban on atmospheric testing, limitations on anti-ballistic missile systems and some restraints on strategic systems. Progress, albeit minor, has also been made on confidence building measures outside the nuclear arena, like the recently completed pact on notification of maneuvers in Europe.

At Geneva in 1985, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed on a goal of reducing nuclear warheads by fifty percent as a substantial step toward eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. At Reykjavik in 1986, the President and the General Secretary went much further, almost agreeing on the total elimination of nuclear missiles in ten years and on a commitment for reliable verification, a key ingredient of any such nuclear agreement. Negotiations are continuing and I believe the promise of Reykjavik will yet be fulfilled.

The aim of the Reagan Administration, like that of U.S. Administrations before it, is to halt and roll back vertical nuclear proliferation, to prevent further horizontal proliferation, and to steer nuclear development toward peaceful applications in energy, medicine, industry, and agriculture. On the one hand, we will do whatever we can diplomatically to guard against additions to the list of nuclear weapons states. On the other hand, we will provide generous support for fully safeguarded peaceful nuclear development. For example, after Egypt signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty we offered Egypt assistance in the construction of a large nuclear power reactor.

As Reykjavik demonstrated, we share your view about the continued dangers of vertical proliferation by nuclear weapons states. We know that the management and the command and control of nuclear weapons systems are an exacting business that has sorely taxed U.S. and Soviet leaders. Indeed, we are painfully aware of a number of near disasters. We also believe horizontal proliferation would make more likely increasing international instability and catastrophic nuclear war. On the way, the threat also increases of seizure and possible use of nuclear weapons and material by terrorists -- the bane of today's civilized world -- or even by dissident military units in times of civil war. A special U.S. concern is escalation in the event of a nuclear clash between regional states to which the United States or the Soviets may have commitments. A broadening regional nuclear war, drawing the United States and the Soviet Union into confrontation, is one conceivable way in which a catastrophic U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange could be triggered.

A number of recent statements that I have noted in the Pakistan press about U.S. non-proliferation policy have, in my view, been wide of the mark. Accordingly, I would like for a moment to identify and comment on a few of these misperceptions about our policy, especially vis-a-vis South Asia.

How many in this room believe we are paranoid about the possibility of a Muslim nuclear weapon, that is, "The Islamic Bomb"? In fact, that is not our concern. Our concern would be the same, whether the next proliferator were Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Atheist. We are opposed to any further spread of nuclear weapons. The important point is that each country that acquires nuclear weapons adds to uncertainty and heightens the risk of nuclear war. Each country that crosses the threshold weakens the chance that nuclear weapons will be eliminated world-wide. More states acquiring nuclear weapons increases the danger to the world.

How many times have we heard the NPT termed "discriminatory"? Are we indeed imposing our views on a world that does not share our concerns? I think not. Most of the world does share our concerns. The NPT has been adopted by over 130 countries -- over 20 just since 1980. Even among countries not party to the treaty, most agree with the key objectives of the treaty: preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons, fostering peaceful nuclear cooperation under verifiable safeguards, and encouraging negotiations to end the nuclear arms race with a view to general and complete disarmament. The NPT system may be imperfect, but it is a uniquely constructive element in the current international system and a principal asset in worldwide efforts to survive in the nuclear era.

The United States is said to be hypocritical in its attitude -- we supposedly monopolize nuclear knowledge so as to preclude even the legitimate access of LDC's to the benefits of cheap nuclear generated electrical power. Without debating the relative costs of nuclear and fossil energy, I would say that the U.S. is prepared to extend peaceful nuclear cooperation to countries which either adhere to the NPT or adopt full scope safeguards for their nuclear facilities. Most other nuclear suppliers take the same approach. In short, we and others would like nothing more than to help Pakistan solve its energy problems by contributing to the safeguarded development of peaceful nuclear energy in Pakistan.

We are also said to be opposed to Pakistan resolving its energy shortage. But the fact is that energy is one of the key priorities for our economic aid. We are spending over \$400 million to assist Pakistan in such diverse areas as energy planning, coal exploration and exploitation, development of renewable energy, rural electrification, and electrical modernization.

How often is the United States charged as well with unfairly discriminating against Pakistan vis-a-vis India? Yet, the fact is that we now have no nuclear cooperation with either Pakistan or India. Our law prohibits us from significant nuclear cooperation with any non-weapon state which is unwilling to have full scope safeguards. We comply with those laws whether the case is Pakistan, India, Brazil, South Africa or Israel.

Since 1977, the Symington Amendment to our Foreign Assistance Legislation has prohibited any direct U.S. assistance to any country which delivers or receives unsafeguarded nuclear enrichment or reprocessing equipment, materials, or technology. It was this law that forced President Carter in 1979, to suspend assistance to Pakistan. This was not a matter of choice for the President and it had nothing to do with U.S. feelings toward Pakistan. It was -- and is -- our law.

It was only in 1981, more than a year after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, that the Administration was able to persuade Congress to approve a specific waiver of the Symington Amendment, thereby permitting renewed aid to Pakistan. Thus, the truth of the matter is that we do discriminate in favor of Pakistan, since Pakistan enjoys a unique exception from our laws that remain applicable to other countries. The 1981 nuclear waiver permitted us to fund a multi-year assistance program which has had as its basic objective building Pakistani self-confidence by improving its defensive military capabilities, and supporting areas key to continued vigorous economic development. Pakistan now is the fourth largest recipient of U.S. bilateral aid. We are in the last year of an initial \$3.2 billion assistance program.

The follow-on multi-year program now before Congress totals just over \$4 billion. However, the nuclear waiver legislated in 1981 must again in 1987 be passed by both Houses of Congress or there will be no follow-on program. Thus, the nuclear question remains critical for our cooperation.

Why do we worry so much about nuclear weapons in South Asia? You may well ask: Is it Pakistan's fault that the nuclear menace hangs over South Asia? The answer is, of course, "no", but simply saying "no" does not end the problem, nor does it eliminate the specter of nuclear war. It is not that the U.S. does not appreciate the solemn assurances by Pakistani leaders that Pakistan's nuclear program is entirely peaceful. Indeed, we give full credit to Pakistani leaders that Pakistan's nuclear program is entirely peaceful. Indeed, we give full credit to Pakistan for the bold manner in which it has put forward a series of proposals to India the end result of which, if agreed, would be achievement of a regional solution to this regional problem. Among these are proposals for: simultaneous signature of the non-proliferation treaty; simultaneous acceptance of international inspection or full scope safeguards; bilateral inspection of each other's nuclear facilities; a collective and therefore binding joint declaration by India/Pakistan renouncing the acquisition or manufacture of nuclear weapons; agreement on a South Asian nuclear weapons free zone.

We, like you, have urged India to respond to these constructive suggestions or to table new ones of its own. The 1985 agreement "in principle" ruling out attacks against each other's nuclear facilities was a welcome first step. Unfortunately, the nuclear dialogue between India and Pakistan so tentatively begun has not been further advanced.

While Pakistan has publicly demonstrated a commitment to regional non-proliferation, I must add in all candor that there are developments in Pakistan's nuclear program which we see as inconsistent with a purely peaceful program. Indications that Pakistan may be seeking a weapons capability generate tension and uncertainty. Is ambiguity in Pakistan's national interest? Would it not be better to reduce tension? To replace uncertainty by near certainty? To accept full-scope safeguards, thereby assuring the world that nuclear programs said to be peaceful, are in fact peaceful?

Behind these questions is another. The gut question is: would nuclear arms make Pakistan more or less secure? In a recent issue of the "Defense Journal", Brigadier Abdul Rahman Siddiqui urges Pakistan to "keep its nuclear options open". His thesis revolves around the theory of deterrence and how nuclear weapons could redress the balance of power which shifted to India after the 1971 war.

I think this analysis of deterrence, which seductive as far as it goes, does not go far enough into the issue. For example, excruciatingly difficult moral and political considerations might well preclude resort to nuclear weapons, as the U.S. concluded during the Korean and Vietnamese wars. Moreover, in strategic terms, were India, already enjoying a marked geographical advantage, also to acquire a greater nuclear weapons capability, Pakistan would have no sane, no rational, use for nuclear weapons.

While India conducted the first South Asian nuclear test in 1974, successive Indian governments have not so far configured this capability into a deployable weapon. Moreover, Prime Minister Gandhi has repeatedly said India does not want to pursue the nuclear weapons option. But he has also said India would hold open the option in anticipation of developments in Pakistan. One may ask, would it be in Pakistan's best interest to push India to produce nuclear weapons?

India has a much greater nuclear potential than Pakistan. Indeed, we are acutely aware of and concerned by the fact that India's nuclear reactors together with India's unsafeguarded reprocessing plants are quite capable of producing large amounts of plutonium usable for weapons. While India, like Pakistan, would have far more to lose than to gain from nuclear weapons, India is large enough geographically, strong enough militarily, and capable enough scientifically to be better able to survive a conflict than Pakistan.

In assessing possibilities for system stability in South Asia, it is important to note that neither Pakistan nor India can, in the foreseeable future, hope to afford the secure delivery systems (for example, missiles in hardened silos or ballistic missile submarines) needed to be confident of what is known in the jargon of nuclear deterrence as a "secure second strike capability."

Two dangerous outcomes would ensue. First, possession of nuclear weapons, especially those vulnerable to attack, would result in a highly unstable situation, with large incentives for each side to consider the preemptive use of nuclear weapons out of fear that the other side would strike first. Second, justifiable doubt about the ability of national nuclear forces to constitute a credible deterrent would force both nations to continue major conventional force modernization programs in addition to their nuclearization efforts--a very expensive proposition as we in the West unfortunately have discovered.

One must also consider the impact of a decision to acquire nuclear weapons on Pakistani relations with other nations, including the United States. Our ability under U.S. law to provide economic and security assistance to Pakistan remains dependent on Pakistani restraint in the nuclear area. In 1985, Congress legislated a new annual requirement that, for our assistance program to continue, the President must certify that Pakistan does not have a nuclear explosive device and that our aid substantially reduces the risk it will obtain one. The President has twice so certified. For the future, I would note that it is open to question whether the President could so certify were he to conclude that Pakistan had in hand, but not assembled, all the needed components for a nuclear explosive device.

As I noted above, we must this year win approval of both Houses of Congress to extend the present Symington waiver. Thus, Congress, not just the President, will decide if we are to be able to continue aid past 1987. Were Pakistan to sign the NPT or to adopt full-scope safeguards, a positive outcome would be virtually assured.

Relations with India

Pakistan has seized the negotiating initiative with a series of proposals that would provide a regional settlement to what is admittedly a regional problem. But, if Pakistan's non-proliferation policy, however far-sighted it may be, depends on the Indian response to its proposals, does this not amount to making Pakistan's future hostage to Indian decisions? If Indian failure to respond positively leads to deadlock and continued drift forward in national nuclear weapons programs, which country stands to lose the most? With regret I must say that in my opinion both countries would be large losers but that Pakistan's loss would be the greater.

We share your concern over regional tensions. We regret that after three wars, distrust, even paranoia, runs deep in both countries. We applaud President Zia's "peace offensive" and Prime Minister Junejo's attempts to normalize relations with India. Both countries, in our view, have much to gain from solid friendly relations. If we and the Soviets can dialogue and negotiate to reduce tensions, why not India and Pakistan? Dialogue can advance both in expanding areas of agreement and in identifying a verification mechanism or mechanisms to assuage the considerable doubts felt by both parties about the other's intentions and capabilities.

To advance the political dialogue, I believe it is in Pakistan's interest to act unilaterally to sign the NPT. Bold Pakistani action to take the high moral ground could well forestall Indian acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability. If not, Pakistan would still be free under the treaty to reconsider its options. In the interim, such bold action would remove a significant potential stumbling block to U.S. Congressional approval of the future security assistance Pakistan needs for its defense. Even more importantly, it would open the possibility for significant international assistance for civil nuclear energy development in Pakistan. Completion of the proposed 1,000 megawatt chasma nuclear energy reactor would become a realizable goal far sooner with international help, both technical and financial, than without it.

Pakistan, as we are all aware, has recently gone through a period of high tension in her relations with India. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and a process of force deescalation has been negotiated. That war could have loomed so close when there appeared to be no reason for concern other than the reciprocal misperceptions of each other's military exercises is yet another proof of the existence of dangerously intense mutual distrust. Effort is urgently needed to place Indian-Pakistani relations on a new basis.

I would think that initially a range of confidence-building measures is required. Certainly, confidence in each other's intentions will not be enhanced by either country pursuing a nuclear weapons option. The recent "war scare" was bad enough. How would the leaders and the general public have felt had there been a "red alert" proclaimed while Pakistan or India or both were believed to have or known to have nuclear weapons in their arsenals? That frightening prospect, I submit, merits your most careful consideration.

Soon Pakistan will have to choose among the renunciation of nuclear weapons, their overt development, or continuation of a policy of ambiguity. Each course has for Pakistan its advantages and disadvantages. But truly Pakistan's decision is a fateful one. Indeed, the future of hundreds of millions of people in South Asia is involved. I hope your choice will be made only after full discussion and informed debate. May God grant you and Pakistan's other decision-makers the wisdom to make the right choice for Pakistan, for South Asia, and for the world. Thank you.